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**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA DELEGATION URGES
GOVERNOR AND STATE LEGISLATURE FOR DECLARATION OF
AIR QUALITY EMERGENCY IN SOUTH COAST AIR BASIN**

SACRAMENTO – A delegation of elected officials representing the leadership of the Southern California Association of Governments’ (SCAG) Regional Council and the South Coast Air Quality Management District met with members of the State Senate, State Assembly and State Agencies to urge a declaration of a state of emergency to address the serious air quality challenges facing the South Coast Air Basin. This emergency declaration, the delegation argues, would facilitate greater access to funding and regulatory authority to address this health crisis.

“Our region pays a heavy price for being the nation’s ‘loading dock’ by handling more than a third of the freight traffic for movement by sea, air, land and rail,” said Gary Ovitt, San Bernardino County supervisor, SCAG president and AQMD board member. “We need action now to deal with this air quality crisis.”

In addition to Supervisor Ovitt, the SCAG Regional Council delegation was represented by:

- Hon. Harry Baldwin, San Gabriel mayor and SCAG 2nd Vice President
- Hon. Ron Loveridge, Riverside Mayor; SCAG, AQMD and California Air Resources Board member
- Hon. Tonia Reyes Uranga, Long Beach city councilmember; SCAG and AQMD board member
- Hon. Dennis Washburn, Calabasas city councilmember and SCAG board member

A California Air Resources Board (CARB) report delivered in January 2007 to the SCAQMD showed that each year the South Coast Air Basin suffers 5,400 premature deaths, 2,400 hospitalizations, 140,000 cases of asthma and other lower respiratory problems, and 980,000 lost work days because of exposure to diesel related pollution. Residents of the South Coast Air Basin are exposed to 52% of the national exposure of PM2.5 above the federal standard and approximately 80% of the emissions associated with these pollutants are mainly beyond local control.

The group met with members of the Southern California delegation, as well as the majority and minority staff members of key State Senate and Assembly Committees.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: For more information about the SCAG resolution calling for a declaration of a state of emergency for the air quality in the South Coast Air Basin, please call Jeff Lustgarten of Cerrell Associates at 323/466-3445]